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Attitude of Parents in the Metropolis of Lagos towards Inclusion of Sexuality Education in the School Curriculum

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Abstract

The study investigated the attitude of parents in the metropolis of Lagos towards the inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum. The study employed the descriptive research design. The sample for the study consisted of one hundred and fifty(150) parents who were randomly selected from Lagos metropolis. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data was obtained using a self designed questionnaire titled Attitude of Parents Towards inclusion of Sexuality Education in the School Curriculum Questionnaire (APTISESCQ). The instrument has a reliability co-efficient of $r = 0.75$. The data obtained was analysed using the t -test for hypothesis one and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for hypothesis two. Results showed that there is no significant difference in the attitude of parents towards inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum on the basis of gender and educational qualifications. Based on the findings, recommendations were made that there is the need to intensify efforts in educating parents on the importance of sexuality education and also that sexuality educators should be properly trained.

Keywords: attitude, parents, sexuality education, inclusion, school curriculum

Introduction

The concept of sexuality education has been a topical issue and its inclusion in the school curriculum has generated and is still generating a lot of interest in Nigeria.

The controversy about sexuality education stems from the fact that most people do not have an accurate understanding of what sexuality education is all about and the benefits that could be derived from it (Madunagu, 2005).

Sexuality education according to the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) is an education process designed to assist young people in their physical, social, emotional and moral development as they prepare for adulthood, marriage, parenthood and ageing, as well as their social relationship in the socio-cultural context of family and society (IPPF, 1987). In another vein, Action Health Incorporated (AHI) explained sexuality education “as a planned process of education that fosters the acquisition of factual information, the formation of positive attitudes, beliefs and values as well as the development of skills to cope with the biological, psychological, socio-cultural and spiritual aspects of human sexuality” (AHI, 2003).

The origin of the concept of sexuality education can be traced back to our ancestors who laid much emphasis on the care of self and the act of procreation. However, sexuality education came into being in different countries at different times (Adepoju, 2005). In 1897, a female Swedish doctor, Koralina Wilderstorm saw the need to educate the young ones, especially the girls about sexual hygiene as a way of informing and protecting them from sexually transmitted diseases such as gonorrhea and syphilis which were found to be common during the period.

In Nigeria, the evolution of sexuality education and its introduction in Nigerian schools became apparent as there was an urgent need to address adolescents reproductive health, sexual rights and sexuality issues (Adepoju, 2005). The increasing need for sexuality education is also premised on the increasing health risk of adolescents who constitute over 36% of the Nigerian population. By nature, adolescents are susceptible to unplanned sex, unprotected sex, sexual coercion, sexual violence, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV because they are uninformed or poorly informed about the implications of their reproductive

behaviour and health risk especially from underage sexual practices and other anti-social practices. The Nigerian government approved the inclusion for comprehensive sexuality education in Nigeria in August 2001 (Madunagu, 2005).

The objective of the school based sexuality education according to Sexuality Information and Educational Council of the United States (SEICUS) is to help young people build a foundation as they mature into sexually healthy adults. Other goals of school based sexuality education include the provision of accurate information about human sexuality, provide opportunity for young people to develop and understand their values, attitudes and insights about sexuality; to help young people develop relationships and interpersonal skills and to help them act responsibly regarding sexual relationships, which include addressing abstinence, pressure to become prematurely involved in sexual intercourse and the use of contraception and other health measures (SEICUS, 2006).

Sexuality education in schools have found support among American parents, according to a 2009 SEICUS report, it was found out that 93% of parents surveyed supported sexuality education in high school while 84% supported it for junior high school students. Kaiser Family Foundation (2004) reported in another study that 88% of parents of junior high school students and 80% of parents of high school students believe that sexuality education makes it easier for them to talk to their adolescents about sex. However, the situation is not the same in Nigeria inclusion of sexuality education in school curriculum is being hampered by culture, religious beliefs, ignorance and illiteracy (Madunagu,2005). Sexuality education has been found to reduce teenage pregnancy in the United States of America (Kirby, 2007).The incidence of new HIV/AIDS transmission in Uganda decreased dramatically when the former United States president Bill Clinton supported a comprehensive sex education approach(Wikipedia,2011). Adolescents have also lent their support to the introduction of sexuality education in the school curriculum (Locker,2001).

Blekinsop, Wade, Benton, Gnaldi, Schagen (2004) identified people to provide sexuality education; they include parents, carers, teachers and young people. At home young people can easily have one-on-one discussions with parents or carers which focus on specific issues, questions or concerns. The home front is very important to sexuality education because if the parents have a negative attitude towards sexuality education, it will be difficult if not impossible for other sources of teaching sexuality education to be effective. This is buttressed by the findings of Locker (2001) who submitted that 92% of adolescents reported that they want to talk to their parents about sex. Hence the need to find out the attitude of parents in the metropolis towards the inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum.

Statement of the problem

In spite of the good intentions of the Nigerian government and stakeholders in introducing sexuality education into the school curriculum as well as the likely risks that adolescents in Nigeria are confronted with in the area of reproductive health, opinions are still divided over the propriety or otherwise of the inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum. This study therefore intends to find out the attitude of parents in the metropolis towards the inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the attitude of parents in the metropolis towards the inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum on the basis of gender as well as educational qualification.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of parents in the metropolis towards inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum on the basis of gender.

2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of parents in the metropolis towards the inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum on the basis of educational qualification.

Methodology

A descriptive research method was adopted for this study. The population for the study comprised of all parents in Lagos State. A total of one hundred and fifty (150) parents who were randomly selected formed the sample of the study. A self report inventory designed by the researchers Attitude of Parents Towards Sexuality Education in Schools Questionnaire (APTSESQ) was used to obtain data. The questionnaire was in two sections- Section A and B. Section A was used to obtain the bio-data of respondents while Section B is a 15 item self report inventory that sought information on the attitude of parents in the metropolis towards inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum. A four point Likert type scale was used for rating the items: Strongly Agree=4; Agree=3; Disagree =2; Strongly Disagree=1. A test retest method was adopted to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. With an interval of two weeks the questionnaire had a reliability coefficient of 0.75. The data obtained was statistically analysed at 0.05 level of significance using the t test for hypothesis one and a one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for hypothesis two.

Results

Hypothesis one: There is no significant difference in the attitude of parents in the metropolis towards the inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum on the basis of gender.

Table 1: t-test result of attitude of parents in the metropolis towards the inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum on the basis of gender.

Gender	N	Mean	Sd	df	Cal-t	Crit-t
Male	70	53.32	5.438	148	-0.62	1.96
Female	80	53.39	4.747			

The result indicated that there is no significant difference in the attitude of parents in the metropolis towards the inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum. This was because t-cal (0.62) is less than the crit-t value of (1.96). It therefore means that the attitude of parents in the metropolis towards the inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum do not differ on the basis of gender, the hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis two. There is no significant difference in the attitude of parents in the metropolis towards inclusion of sexuality education into the school curriculum on the basis of educational qualification.

Table two: A one- way analysis of variance of attitude of parents in the metropolis towards inclusion of sexuality education into the school curriculum on the basis of educational qualification

Sources of variation	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Between groups	53.111	3	17.704	.585	.625
Within group	4414.94	146	30.239		
Total	4468.060	149			

The result in the above table showed that there is no significant difference in the attitude of parents in the metropolis towards the inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum on the basis of their educational qualification because the level of significance is .625 which is less than the F-ratio of 1.595 at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis is therefore accepted

Discussion

Hypothesis one which states that therefore is no significant difference in the attitude of parents in the metropolis towards inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum on the basis of gender was accepted.

This implies that gender has no effect on the attitude of parents in the metropolis towards the inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum. That is whether male or female, the attitudes of the respondents are not statistically significantly different. This finding agrees with the submission of Swan, Bowe, McCormick & Korsmin (2003) who concluded that gender does not affect attitude of parents towards the inclusion of sexuality education in schools.

Hypothesis two which states that there is no significant difference in the attitude of parents in the metropolis towards inclusion of sexuality education in schools on the basis of educational qualification was accepted. The implication of this finding is that regardless of respondent's educational qualification there is no difference in the attitude of respondents. This finding is supported by the finding of Dainlard (2008). who reported that educational status of parents do not have any impact on parent's attitude in the metropolis towards inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum.

Conclusion

This study has shown that there is no significant difference in the attitude of parents in the metropolis towards the inclusion of sexuality education in the school curriculum on the basis of gender and educational background. It therefore becomes necessary to re-strategize on how to carry parents along in sexuality education.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study the following recommendations were made

- people should be allowed to discuss their beliefs, misgivings, about sexuality education freely .
- various misgivings about sexuality education must be addressed.
- counsellors must have adequate training about sexuality education.
- effective collaboration among various stakeholders in sexuality education such as health workers, social workers, international organizations, Non Governmental Organization, religious leaders.
- stakeholders should organize seminars, workshops, training on sexuality education.
- improvement in methods of teaching sexuality education
- continuous training of sexuality educators
- design and provide appropriate and adequate educational resources materials on sexuality education.

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